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*The Partnership for Michigan's Health*

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**To:** House Health Policy Committee Members

**From:** The Partnership for Michigan's Health (Michigan's hospitals and physicians)

**Date:** April 20, 2016

**Subject:** Increase Access to Naloxone

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Nationwide, our communities face a crisis that affects people across the demographic spectrum. Opioid overdoses are taking the lives of mothers, fathers and children at alarming rates. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ranks Michigan 18th in the nation for opioid overdose deaths. **To protect our patients, the Partnership for Michigan's Health firmly advocates for passing of legislation that increases the access to naloxone.**

Opioids include heroin and prescription pain pills like morphine, codeine, oxycodone, methadone and Vicodin. If a person is experiencing an opioid overdose, breathing can slow down or stop. Narcan™ (naloxone), an opiate antidote, may be prescribed to essentially block the effects of opioids, reversing the overdose. The drug by itself cannot get a person "high." If given to a person who has not taken opioids, it has no effect and no potential for abuse. The use of naloxone has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration and is widely used across the country to combat overdose deaths.

While efforts are being made to revise prescription practices and stem the tide of illegal drugs, we have the ability to prevent a great number of overdose deaths, and perhaps in turn provide individuals the help they need to overcome addiction.

The use of naloxone is gaining acceptance by first responders and law enforcement agencies across the state. Even in its limited availability, naloxone is preventing overdose deaths in our communities. Currently, 35 states allow the sale of naloxone without prescriptions. In Michigan, Senate Bill 778 and House Bill 5326 seek to increase a pharmacy's ability to dispense naloxone. Both bills were introduced as a result of the recommendations of Gov. Snyder's Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Task Force.

In 2014, Michigan passed legislation allowing patients to have access to naloxone through prescription and providing safe harbor to those who administer it. The Partnership for Michigan's Health strongly recommends the expanded access and use of naloxone by first responders from emergency services and law enforcement. We also advocate for dispensing of naloxone to family members and friends, as they often act as first responders to someone who is at high risk of sustaining an opioid overdose before other help arrives. Finally, we recommend that financial and other administrative barriers be properly addressed so that all obstacles to access can be eliminated.

In a complex crisis, few aspects are as clear as the positive effects of the use of naloxone. Simply put, naloxone saves lives. For more information, please contact:

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